

**Agency: University of Alaska****Project Title:****UAA - "The Next 50 Years" Public Dialogue Project****State Funding Requested: \$ 350,000****House District: Statewide (1-40)**

Future Funding May Be Requested

**Brief Project Description:**

This proposal is for the state's participation in partial funding of a series of structured discussions throughout the state that focus on what Alaskans want for their future and how to finance the public services associated with that future.

**Funding Plan:****Total Cost of Project: \$350,000**Funding Secured*Amount      FY*Other Pending Requests*Amount      FY*Anticipated Future Need*Amount      FY*

There is no other funding needed

**Detailed Project Description and Justification:**

The Next 50 Years – Alaskans' Vision for the Future

The 50th Anniversary of Statehood is providing an opportunity for Alaskans to not only look back, but also forward at what kind of future they want for their family, community, and state.

This proposal is for the state's participation in partial funding of a series of structured discussions throughout the state that focus on what Alaskans want for their future and how to finance the public services associated with that future. It is anticipated that a critical part of these discussions will be what role—if any—does the Permanent Fund have in achieving that future. This process will be similar to the community-based discussions that took place in the late-1970s as part of Governor Hammond's Growth Policy Council.

This project will involve statewide meetings, community-based discussions, use of technology, and other innovative tools to constructively discuss and identify common ground on these issues. Funding will support research to prepare and produce materials, meeting logistics, and temporary project staff. The project's "home" will be the University of Alaska Anchorage because of its research expertise and the university system's presence in communities around the state.

To date, efforts to constructively discuss the Permanent Fund's role in the state's finances have only served to accentuate different perspectives:

- Conventional decision making processes tend to accentuate such differences and there is little opportunity for hands-on involvement by citizens
- Efforts to date have typically had buy-in of only the Legislature, Governor, or citizens, this process will involve all three of these key stakeholders

Another difference, is that this project will use a collaborative approach to advance discussions and build consensus:

- A collaborative approach is a deliberative process by which Alaskans will have constructive input on the direction of the state's future;
- A collaborative approach will frame the issues—not control them;
- A collaborative approach will engage Alaskans—and provide opportunities for learning;
- A collaborative approach will integrate a process that builds on community discussion and statewide meetings that will be held around the state and will focus Alaskans on a vision for the state's future, as well as to develop recommendations on how to achieve that vision;
- A collaborative approach will encourage multiple ideas to emerge; there will be no "wrong answers";
  - o These ideas and recommendations will serve as "inputs" to elected officials for their decision-making;
- A collaborative approach is a way to create and re-build trust among citizens, legislators and the administration, which is critical to future public decision-making at all levels;
- A collaborative approach needs Legislators and the Governor to support the process through their participation and partial financing of the project—otherwise there is no reason to embark on such a process.

Once public and private funding—and participation by the Legislature and Administration is secured—a wide range of interest groups, who have been working together over the past year, will begin to plan the process.

The process proposed in this request is the result of work done by a Commonwealth North study group. The report, *At A Crossroad: The Permanent Fund, Alaskans, and Alaska's Future*, can be found at [www.commonwealthnorth.org](http://www.commonwealthnorth.org).

**Project Timeline:**

2008

**Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:**

Common Wealth North and the University of Alaska Anchorage

**Grant Recipient Contact Information:**

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Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☐ Yes ☒ No